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# Texas Department of Health

## The Commissioner's Report to the Board of Health

September 19, 2003

### Hot Topics



#### West Nile Virus – As of September 18, 2003

TDH has recorded 213 human cases of West Nile in 49 Texas counties this year, including eight deaths.

Human cases have occurred in Andrews (2), Angelina (3), Bexar (4), Brazos (2), Caldwell (1), Cameron (5), Collin (1), Dallas (38), Deaf Smith (1), Denton (3), Donley (1), Ector (2), Ellis (3), El Paso (5), Falls (1), Galveston (1), Gregg (5), Hale (2), Harris (31), Harrison (1), Hemphill (1), Hidalgo (8), Hockley (1), Jefferson (4), Johnson (2), Kaufman (1), Lamb (1), Lubbock (17), Maverick (1), Midland (6), Montgomery (17), Moore (1), Nueces (1), Oldham (1), Orange (3), Panola (2), Randall (4), Shackelford (1), Smith (5), Starr (1), Swisher (2), Tarrant (6), Taylor (1), Terry (1), Travis (8), Waller (1), Webb (1), Wichita (2) and Willacy (1) counties. Age range - 10 to 89, Males continue to outnumber females.

The eight deaths were in residents of Ellis, Hidalgo, Lubbock (2), Montgomery, Taylor, Travis and Wichita counties.

West Nile has been detected in humans, birds, mosquitoes or horses in 128 Texas counties in 2003.

In 2002 -- the first year West Nile was found in Texas -- the virus was detected in humans, birds, mosquitoes or horses in 213 of Texas' 254 counties. There were 202 human cases, including 13 deaths.

Maps showing counties with WN activity can be found at:

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis/diseases/Arboviral/westNile/statistics/maps.asp>. For more information, contact Jim Schuermann, Zoonosis Control Division, at (512) 458-7255 or e-mail [jim.schuermann@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jim.schuermann@tdh.state.tx.us).



#### West Nile Concern High in Region 1

Region 1 (Lubbock area) has the highest level of West Nile Virus (WNV) test reports in the state, most likely due to the late arrival of the virus last year. In August, WNV infection was confirmed in squirrels and an alpaca in Region 1, the first instance of infections in these species in Texas. Because of the high incidence of West Nile in the region, the public education campaign has been enhanced. Regional staff members have developed a two-page flier to convey the key prevention messages. These materials are to be carried to TDH constituents, stakeholders and public health partners by all regional

staff during the course of their duties during the remainder of this WNV season. *For more information, contact Karen McDonald, Zoonosis Control Division, at (806) 767-0427 or e-mail [karen.mcdonald@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:karen.mcdonald@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **TDH Reduction in Force (RIF) Results**

The agency's Reduction in Force was completed on August 31. In the first phase of the RIF, programs tried to match affected employees to vacant positions and transfer them to new positions prior to the employee receiving an official RIF letter. During the second phase, the remaining employees received an official RIF letter and were given two options. They could receive 30 days of emergency leave (vacate the job on July 31 and be paid through August 31) and not receive in-house job placement assistance, or they could remain on the job and take advantage of job placement assistance. Employees who chose job placement assistance first identified vacant positions; HR verified that the pay group was appropriate and referred the employee for an interview with the supervisor of the vacant position. The supervisor was able to hire the employee with the highest tenure with appropriate skills. Any employee not placed by August 31 was terminated. Only three employees who chose job assistance and could not be placed. Specific numbers are shown below:

#### Central Office:

95 employees originally identified on RIF plans  
28 employees removed from RIF list (program found funding or employees were mistakenly put on the list)  
6 employees retired  
14 employees chose option one and went home on emergency leave  
47 employees were transferred to new positions  
Of the 95 employees originally identified, 38 employees actually received RIF letters  
All were placed in vacant positions

#### Regions:

129 employees originally identified on RIF plans  
27 employees removed from RIF list (program found funding or employees were mistakenly put on the list)  
24 employees retired  
18 employees chose option one and went home on emergency leave  
57 employees were transferred to new positions  
Of the 129 employees originally identified, 48 employees actually received RIF letters  
3 employees were unable to be placed and were terminated

*For more information, contact Wanda Thompson, Operational Support, at (512) 458-7720 or e-mail [wanda.thompson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:wanda.thompson@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Texas to Receive Additional Federal Funds for Public Health Preparedness**

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced that another \$1.4 billion is being made available to the states, territories and three metropolitan areas to help strengthen their capacity to respond to terrorism and other public health emergencies.

The money will allow states to continue planning and upgrading the public health system and hospitals/health care entities that will be called upon to respond.

The funds will be used to upgrade infectious disease surveillance and investigation, enhance the readiness of hospitals and the health care system to deal with large numbers of casualties, expand public health laboratory and communications capacities and improve connectivity between hospitals, and city, local and state health departments to enhance disease reporting.

Texas will receive approximately \$48,310,184 in CDC funds and \$33,338,368 in Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funds for a total of \$81,648,552. This does not include the federal funds for the Strategic National Stockpile or smallpox activities.

TDH also understands that Texas may be receiving an additional \$1.5 million in federal funds to address bioterrorism and public health preparedness along the Texas/Mexico border. TDH has not received any additional information or guidance about this particular award. *For more information, contact Dennis Perrotta, Office of the State Epidemiologist, at (512) 458-7219 or e-mail [dennis.perrotta@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:dennis.perrotta@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Advisory Committees**

As part of consolidation efforts under HB 2292, the following advisory committees were certified by HHSC as exempt from abolishment under HB 2292 and will continue in existence. HHSC noted that certified committees could be subject to further change during the transition to the consolidation of HHS agencies or administrative functions.

Respiratory Care  
Texas HIV Medication  
State Preventative Health  
Preparedness Coordinating Council  
Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Committee  
Hospital Preparedness Planning Committee  
Asbestos Advisory Committee  
Youth Camps Advisory Committee  
Promotoro(a) Community Health Worker Training and Certification Advisory Committee  
Texas Radiation Advisory Board  
Texas Oyster Council  
Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council  
Informational & Educational Subcommittee for the Family Planning Program  
Device Distributors & Manufacturers Advisory Committee  
Registered Sanitarian Advisory Committee  
Code Enforcement Officers' Advisory Committee  
Medical Radiologic Technologist Advisory  
Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Adv Council

Independent boards & councils were not impacted by the legislation.

*For more information, contact Jackie McDonald, Board of Health Office, at (512) 458-7223 or e-mail [jackie.mcdonald@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jackie.mcdonald@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Water Damage at Region 4/5North Headquarters**

The roof at the Cotton Belt Building in Region 4/5North leaked during a recent rainstorm. This has resulted in significant water damage to many offices, impeding access to computers, phones, and limiting program operations. Regional staff met with county officials and they are giving priority to repairing rook leaks at this time and will proceed with water remediation efforts. *For more information, contact Paul McGaha, Regional Director, at (903) 533-5264 or e-mail [paul.mcgaha@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:paul.mcgaha@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **HHSC Requires Functional Review**

The Health and Human Services Commission has directed TDH to complete an agency-wide functional review by Monday, Oct. 6. All HHS agencies are completing this review. TDH is in a great position to complete this assignment because it has just completed a functional review based on the HHSC model and containing much of what HHSC is requiring. Additional information is available from our preparation for the legislative session.

Staff are currently preparing the documents required which include overview of responsibilities; client services and program activities; key stakeholder groups; issues/challenges for FY04; and FY04 budget, contract, and FTE information. We will submit the TDH functional review documents on September 26.

On October 6, Dr. Sanchez and other TDH leadership will meet with HHSC executives to review the work of the agency. The goal for the meeting on Oct 6 is to have an interactive discussion and to begin to familiarize the HHSC leadership with the full spectrum of public health programs at TDH. The functional review information we provide to HHSC will continue to be a primary resource for HHSC executives as we move forward with the transition required by HB2292. *For more information, contact Hallie Overton, Office of Strategic Health Planning, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-6537, or e-mail [hallie.overton@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:hallie.overton@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **HHSC Administrative Consolidation Continue**

HHSC Consolidation Workgroups continue to address administrative areas of purchasing, civil rights, planning & evaluation, IT, and financial. This week, a group begins work identifying relevant Ombudsman (customer service) functions. Status on activities of the workgroups include:

- Staff performing in-scope purchasing functions are scheduled for transition to become HHSC staff in October.
- Staff performing in-scope civil rights functions are scheduled for transition to become HHSC staff in October. The Civil Rights workgroup also submitted a draft civil rights policy.
- Staff performing in-scope planning & evaluation functions were scheduled for transition to become HHSC staff in October.
- Agency Information Resource Managers are scheduled to begin direct reporting to HHSC around the first of November, and the IT Workgroup has finalized a job description for the Chief Information Officer.
- The Chief Financial Officers working on the financial consolidation have a September 29 deadline for submitting a proposed implementation plan.

HB 2292 establishes a new Office of Inspector General. The Inspector General is appointed by the Governor. An HHSC Workgroup is considering 7 relevant functions for the office, and the projected deadline for consolidation of the functions and co-location of the staff is the end of January 2004. *For more information, contact Elaine Powell, Office of Business Improvement, at (512) 458-7303 or e-mail [elaine.powell@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:elaine.powell@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **New Case Management Rules in Effect**

New rules combine two Medicaid case management programs into one. The new program is called Case Management for Children and Pregnant Women (CPW). The changes ensure through prior authorization that only eligible recipients receive services, reduce fragmentation and duplication, and increase continuity of care.

Prior to making the decision to change the existing programs, 10 stakeholder meetings were held across the state and approximately 500 interested parties attended. Overwhelmingly, the comments received requested TDH to address the quality and duplication concerns by changing the current programs versus considering a Medicaid waiver to create an alternative structure for providing services. In response to stakeholder input, program rule changes were proposed, approved, and implemented on September 1, 2003.

Many providers will experience decreased reimbursement due to the strengthening of eligibility requirements in the new rules and the additional oversight of eligibility and enrollment. The decreased reimbursement will be the result of denials of prior authorizations for ineligible clients and rule changes that have eliminated the reimbursement of the intake into services. The intake was a brief assessment of eligibility that was not a reimbursed component in any other Medicaid service. These changes, however, were necessary to provide more accountability in issues of quality, prevent overpayment, and prevent provision of inappropriate services.

The implementation of the prior authorization process and the high volume of faxes received on ineligible clients have caused some unavoidable delays in responses to providers regarding eligibility determination and approval to serve. The high rate of denials on requests received indicates a large number of clients were being served previously who did not meet eligibility criteria. TDH staff is doing everything possible to expedite the processing of all requests. *For more information, contact Duane Thomas, Case Management, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-3064, or e-mail [duane.thomas@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:duane.thomas@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Fish Consumption Advisory**

Fish consumption advisory was issued by TDH for Leon Creek in San Antonio. The advisory was issued for elevated levels of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB's) in the Lackland and Kelly Air Force bases. The advisory received much local media attention. *For more information, contact Kirk Wiles, Seafood Safety Division, at (512) 719-0215 or e-mail [kirk.wiles@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:kirk.wiles@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## Disease Outbreaks/Investigations



### TDH Investigates Arsenic in Hebbronville

TDH, working with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), conducted a biological indicators exposure investigation for arsenic in Hebbronville on August 4-8 in response to citizen concerns about arsenic in their drinking water. Historically, the water system has had arsenic levels near or slightly above the current regulatory limit; however, the amount of arsenic that will be allowed in public water systems will be lowered in 2006. TDH measured arsenic levels in 140 individuals who get their drinking water from the Jim Hogg Water Control and Improvement District.

TDH is notifying individuals by phone and letter about the results of this investigation. Test results indicate exposure levels for individuals tested are above the average reported for the general population. While the concentrations of arsenic found in the water do not pose an immediate health threat, residents are being advised of ways to reduce their exposure.

TCEQ is working with the utility to reduce the level of arsenic in the water supply. The utility has received funding from the USDA Rural Utility Service to increase capacity and install a treatment system to eliminate the arsenic problem and improve water quality. TDH plans to sponsor a public meeting with community members to address health concerns. *For more information, contact John Villanacci, Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology Division, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-6175, or e-mail [john.villanacci@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:john.villanacci@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA)

MRSA infections reported from community-based settings continue to increase. Reports of MRSA infections on five football teams have been reported. One of these involves 10 players and is being investigated by Region 2/3. A large community-focused outbreak, involving over 50 people, since mid-May, is being investigated by Region 6/5S staff.

Under the guidance of Dr. Michael Neret, Matagorda Local Health Authority and Region 6/5South Regional Director, Matagorda County Health District and Region 6/5South investigated reports of 48 lab confirmed Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) infections from May to July in Matagorda County.

Investigations identified that these likely represent community-acquired infections. Patients ranged in age from 1 to over 70 years of age. No deaths occurred as a result of MRSA; 96% of the cases were treated as outpatients and did not require hospitalization.

Information regarding MRSA was distributed to County schools, nursing homes, day cares, dialysis centers, hospitals/emergency rooms/physicians/clinics and the general public of Matagorda County. The educational efforts outlined above were conducted by a collaborative team including the Matagorda County Health District, the Department of Human Services in Region 6, Region 6/5South staff and IDEAS staff at TDH. *For more information, contact Neil Pascoe, Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [neil.pascoe@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:neil.pascoe@tdh.state.tx.us) or Dr. Huai Lin, Region 6/5South, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [huai.lin@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:huai.lin@tdh.state.tx.us).*





### **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome**

In August one person in Randall County died due to hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. That person's housemate also was ill and tested positive for antibodies to sin nombre virus. Another person from the same trailer park was found to have evidence of past exposure to the virus. TDH regional staff are cooperating with the Amarillo Bi-City-County Health District in the disease investigation and remediation efforts. *For more information, contact James Alexander, Zoonosis Control, at (806) 655-7151 or e-mail [james.alexander@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:james.alexander@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Foodborne/Waterborne Outbreak**

Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance (IDEAS) Division staff learned that in Mid-August there were two typhoid fever cases in the Houston area with indistinguishable genetic fingerprint (PFGE) patterns and no foreign travel. This particular fingerprint has not been seen before in Texas. There are about two dozen cases of typhoid fever reported in the state every year. Foreign travel is documented for 75% or more of these cases. Montgomery County Health Department, City of Houston Health and Human Services, Harris County Health Department, Region 5S/6, IDEAS epidemiologists, and Food and Drug Safety staff are coordinating their efforts to investigate these cases and determine their common link. *For more information, contact Linda Gaul, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [linda.gaul@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.gaul@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Grants/Funding**



### **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Funding**

Texas has received FQHC funding for six New Starts, two Oral Health New Access Service Expansion grants, two Oral Health Expanded Access grants, and five Health Disparities Collaborative grants to address specific health disparities at existing FQHCs. These grants represent total federal funding of \$3,871,551. The New Starts include five new organizations in Beeville, Conroe, Houston, Sanderson, Alice and 1 new site for an existing FQHC in Lubbock. The two Oral Health New Access Service Expansions are in El Paso and Pharr. The two Oral Health Expanded Access grants are in San Antonio and Uvalde. The five Health Disparities Collaborative grants are in Harlingen, Lubbock, Plainview, San Antonio and Uvalde. The DHHS press release is at [www.hhs.gov/news/press/2003pres/20030826.html](http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2003pres/20030826.html). *For more information, contact Connie Berry, Texas Primary Care Office, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-2172, or e-mail [connie.berry@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:connie.berry@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Ryan White CARE Act Title II FY03 Allocations**

The Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention submitted its planned allocations for the 2003 fiscal year to the Health Resources and Services Administration. The State's allocations of FY03 Ryan White CARE Act funds are as follows: \$49,654,018 to the Texas HIV Medications Program; \$459,204 in Minority AIDS Initiative Case Management Contracts; \$14,187,469 in HIV Services Contracts; \$670,574 in State Direct Services and \$9,845,196 in Grantee Administration, Quality Management and Planning and Evaluation. HRSA uses this information to track and monitor the use of CARE Act funds

nationally. For more information, contact Michelle Porter, HIV/STD Health Resources Division, at (512) 490-2505 or e-mail [michelle.porter@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:michelle.porter@tdh.state.tx.us).

## Public Communication



### Professional and Public Comments Gathered for HB 15

TDH has completed its initial process for obtaining professional and public comment in the development of informational materials for women seeking an abortion, as authorized under HB15, the Women's Right to Know Act, passed by the 78th Texas Legislature. TDH convened a workgroup of obstetricians and gynecologists and Perinatal and community health specialists to review and consult with TDH staff on the informational materials. Three public meetings were held with the last public meeting held on August 28. There was a great deal of public input provided on the materials under review, both at the meetings and through the TDH Web site. TDH program and communications staff are now working to prepare the informational materials for a final draft of the materials prior the printing of the booklets in English and Spanish. The last workgroup meeting and public review of the informational materials is tentatively planned for October 9 at the State Capitol. For more information, contact Margaret Méndez, Bureau of Women's Health, at (512) 458-7796 or e-mail [margaret.mendez@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:margaret.mendez@tdh.state.tx.us).



### Public Hearing on DTaP Rules

A public hearing on the proposed rules regarding the fifth dose of DTP/DTaP was posted in the Texas Register on September 5 and held at TDH on September 12. Fifteen people attended including Jan Pelosi who spoke about the importance of immunizations and Troy Rickabaugh who told TDH that his grandchild died earlier this year from pertussis.

All comments received by TDH at the hearing and in writing through September 22 will be addressed in the final documentation to the Board of Health on October 30-31, when the final rules will be presented for approval. For more information, contact Pat Feagin, Immunizations Division, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-6323, or e-mail [pat.feagin@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:pat.feagin@tdh.state.tx.us).



### Stakeholder Meetings on New Laws

The Milk and Dairy Products Division held a stakeholder meeting on September 9 to develop rules incorporating changes brought about by new laws. Ten of the major processors and producers attended the meeting with several TDH staff. A brief review of the statutory fee history of the program was provided by staff, as well as current costs and revenue. The legislative mandate and implementation of HB 2292 was discussed, including a draft proposed new fee structure to cover all program costs.

The meeting was very positive given the subject matter of increasing fees. The stakeholders were complimentary of the Milk and Dairy Program and they will discuss the matter with their members/associates and provide feedback to TDH regarding the draft proposed rules.

Six industry representatives and several TDH staff attended a stakeholder meeting of the Food Warehouse/Wholesaler/Distributors on September 11. Attendees included a large grocery chain, a warehouse operator, and several industry associations. The work of



licensing warehouses in Texas began in the fall of 2000, culminating in SB 1803. A new fee structure was discussed at the meeting, including how to make the new rules revenue neutral with the redistribution of fees between the warehouses and wholesalers/distributors.

The legislative mandate of HB 2292, including continuing to cover costs, and issuing a two-year license was also discussed. TDH staff will draft proposed rules and distribute them for comment to the stakeholders. The meeting was a good discussion of making the rules business friendly but also protecting the consumer's food supply. *For more information, contact Derek Jakovich, Licensing and Enforcement Division, at (512) 719-0246 or e-mail [derek.jakovich@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:derek.jakovich@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Stakeholder Meeting on Two-Year Renewals and Fees**

The Bureau of Radiation Control (BRC) has developed draft rules for conformance with the two-year renewal and two-year fee requirements in House Bill 2292 and has sent post cards to all licensees and registrants concerning the potential changes to permitting and fee requirements and the availability of the draft rules on the Web. BRC staff also notified the stakeholders of a public meeting on the rules to be held on September 29 and 30 at the University of Texas Pickle Center. On September 29, staff will meet with radioactive material licensee representatives to explain and discuss the new rules and other rule changes as a result of legislation and Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) compatibility. On September 30, stakeholders representing x-ray registrants will meet with BRC staff to discuss the draft rules that affect those entities. The draft rules have created a significant amount of interest and concern among the regulated community. *For more information, contact Ruth McBurney, Licensing, Registration, and Standards, at (512) 834-6688, ext. 6689, or e-mail [ruth.mcburney@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ruth.mcburney@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Public Hearing on Draft Texas HIV Medications Program (THMP) Rule Changes**

A public hearing for stakeholder input on the draft THMP eligibility rules was held in June. Stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to make any opinions and/or concerns about the proposed rule changes known to the department. A subsequent and final public hearing was held in July. *For more information, contact Linda S. Moore, Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention, at (512) 490-2505 or e-mail [linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Conferences**



### **Bioterrorism Preparedness Contractors Conference**

TDH's Office of Public Health Preparedness is hosting a Bioterrorism Preparedness Contractors Conference on October 20-22. Keynote Speaker is Mike Sage, CDC, Deputy Director for Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response.

Purpose of the conference is to lay out the vision for BT/Public Health Preparedness in Texas; share information on plans for FY04 activities (focus area lead presentations); brief participants on emerging BT & Public Health Preparedness issues; exchange information on Best Practices; explore problematic issues; brief participants on contract processes; and develop an improved understanding of Public Health.

Cost is \$100.00 per person, \$75.00 per person if five or more registering at the same time, late registration \$125.00. The conference will be at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel.

For more information, visit [www.tdh.state.tx.us/ophp/](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/ophp/) or contact Mary Castleberry, Workforce Development, at (512) 458-7770 or e-mail [mary.castleberry@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:mary.castleberry@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **Infant Formula Theft Sparks Crime Stoppers Press Conference**

On July 29, Crime Stoppers of Houston hosted a press conference on the “Danger Posed to Texas Children from Compromised Infant Formula” and asked for the public’s help in reporting theft, improper storage, transport and sale of the product. The press was interested in the dangers of formula which has been with, what documentation exists of long term problems to infants due to the source of the product, and how the consumer can ensure the product purchased is of the highest quality.

U.S. Attorney, Michael Shelby, discussed the federal effort to combat this organized crime. Representatives from TDH Bureau of Food and Drug Safety (BFDS) discussed the Health and Safety Code violations involved in the trafficking of stolen infant formula and the measures they are taking along with the Texas Attorney General’s (AG) Office to halt the practice and punish the offenders. The AG has initiated civil lawsuits against 14 individuals believed to be involved in the theft and resale of infant formula as a result of BFDS inspections and seizures of suspected stolen product totaling over \$750,000.

Because of the large volume of infant formula the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) purchases, there was mention that WIC clients could be at risk for purchasing compromised formula. WIC was portrayed as a worthwhile nutrition program and a partner in the effort to stop the theft of infant formula. All WIC client services contractors have received written guidelines to aid them in addressing any client concerns as a result of TV and newspaper coverage. Crime Stoppers is offering up to a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those involved in these crimes. For more information, contact Valerie Wolfe, Bureau of Nutrition Services, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-2072, or e-mail [valerie.wolfe@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:valerie.wolfe@tdh.state.tx.us).

## **Administration**



### **TDH Launches Supervisory/Management Development Program**

The Supervisory/Management Development Program (SMDP) is now underway with workshops scheduled for October in Austin, Harlingen, San Antonio and Arlington. This year 173 TDH supervisors and managers from TDH-Austin and the regions will participate in the program. The program was developed to address the issue of strengthening management competency raised in the Survey of Organizational Excellence and in the Business Practices Evaluation Report. The SMDP is a 12-month program of monthly meetings for supervisors and managers. Courses cover a number of areas of concern to supervisors including general supervision, performance review, TDH policy and strategic planning. For more information, the SMDP Web site is located on TDH-online under “Agency Projects” on the front page. Or, you can go directly to <http://tdh-online/smdp>. For more information, contact Joan Strawn, Organizational Development, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-2807, or e-mail [joan.strawn@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:joan.strawn@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **Change Management Initiative**

As part of the agency's change management initiative, our Organization Development Division is making presentations to agency staff on the main points of House Bill 2292 and asking for feedback on possible risks and opportunities associated with the consolidation. Notes from the sessions are being posted on the TDH in Transition web page. To date, presentations have been completed in Temple, Arlington, Tyler, Lubbock, Canyon, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso and Texas Center for Infectious Disease. Future sessions are being scheduled for Harlingen and the central office. *For more information, contact Wanda Thompson, Operational Support, at (512) 458-7720 or e-mail [wanda.thompson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:wanda.thompson@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Consolidated Pharmaceutical Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR) and TDH have concluded the evaluation; best offer negotiation and contract execution for a consolidated pharmaceutical RFP for FY04. The vendor awarded the contract - McKesson Drug Corporation, which is also the current vendor - was reviewed and accepted by the evaluation and negotiation team as the best value vendor. This contract will be a 2-year contract with three optional renewals periods starting September 01, 2005.

The contract's bottom line went from the current 2.03% discount to 2.99% and represents approximately \$700,000 in extra savings to TDH for FY04. Taking the total discount of 2.99% into account, the new contract will produce approximately \$2.1 million in fiscal year savings compared to the previous vendor's price schedules, which ended in FY02. The contract that was negotiated included a matrix for increasing the discount with increased orders. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has indicated that they probably will join us in the contract when their current contract expires on Nov. 30 of this year. If they join the contract, the matrix discount will be increased to a 3.05% discount. This could mean an additional \$33,000 in savings to TDH for FY04.

Additionally, MHMR and TDH will be working with the Texas Building and Procurement Commission (TBPC) to have this contract adopted for statewide availability on TBPC's 'non-automated' contract schedule. TBPC has indicated a high probability to adopt this contract starting in FY04. This adoption by TBPC will allow local, county and other state agencies to join with the contract. And, with this being a 'non-automated' TBPC contract (if the expected TBPC adoption is completed), all payments made to McKesson by MHMR and TDH will not be counted against our HUB expenditures, thus raising our HUB percentage. *For more information, contact Bob Burnette, Procurement & Contract Operations Division, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-6951, or e-mail [bob.burnette@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:bob.burnette@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Awards / Recognition**



### **Healthy Border 2010 Project Awards**

The Office of Border Health provided seven Healthy Border 2010 project awards of around \$5,000.00 to 21<sup>st</sup> Century School, Migrant Health Promotion, Dentists Who Care, Planned Parenthood Association of Hidalgo County in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and to the Environmental Health Association, Jim Hogg County and Laredo Environmental Health in the western part of Region 11. Projects ranged from a vector control course to

diabetes prevention activities. For more information, contact Ramiro Gonzales, Office of Border Health, at (956) 423-0130, ext. 635, or e-mail [ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **2003 Texas Cardiovascular Health Promotion Awards**

The 2003 Texas Cardiovascular Health Promotion Awards awarded three Outstanding Program awards in the following categories: HealthCare - American Heart Association Get With the Guidelines - Coronary Artery Disease, Statewide Program; School - Harlandale Wellness Initiative - Coordinated Approach to Child Health, Morrill Elementary School, Harlandale ISD San Antonio; and Community - Heartlink Medical Center of Plano, Plano. Honorable Mention was awarded to three programs: School Setting (2) - Bryan ISD CATCH - Coordinated Approach to Child Health, Bryan ISD, Bryan and Parker Panthers Taking Action, Parker Intermediate School - Aldine ISD, Houston; and Community Setting - Healthy Tarrant County Collaboration Hypertension Initiative, Healthy Tarrant County Collaboration, Fort Worth. Awardees were recognized and presented plaques at the American Heart Association Leadership Conference July 25.

Jennifer Smith, Director of the TDH's Cardiovascular Health and Wellness Program in Austin, was the recipient of the American Heart Association's *Distinguished Service Award*. These awards recognize volunteers who have provided exceptional service to the American Heart Association, and dedicated themselves to fighting cardiovascular disease and stroke. A research grant of up to \$124,000 has been named in Ms. Smith's honor. The grant will fund research projects in Texas. For more information, call Jennifer Smith, Cardiovascular Health & Wellness Program, at (512) 458-7670 or e-mail [jennifer.smith@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jennifer.smith@tdh.state.tx.us).

## **Media Campaign**



### **STD Awareness Campaign Targets Teens**

The Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention rolled out the TDH STD Awareness Media Campaign in the Houston/Galveston media market on September 15. The campaign will run for five weeks, with the possibility of an additional sixth week pending availability of funds.

This paid radio and TV campaign targets teens, with an emphasis on African American teen girls ages 15-19. The campaign uses the same spots used previously been in the Tyler/Longview and Dallas/Fort Worth markets. The spots can be seen at [www.tdh.state.tx.us/hivstd/pic/stdmedia.htm](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hivstd/pic/stdmedia.htm). In addition to media placement, Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing has developed a "splash" Web page for the campaign at [www.stdfacts.org](http://www.stdfacts.org) that will link users to relevant sections of the TDH Web site. TDH is working with the City of Houston Health and Human Services Department to coordinate with existing outreach activities. The campaign may be extended to additional Texas media markets if funding is available. For more information, contact Greg Beets, HIV/STD Health Resources, at (512) 490-2500, ext. 2671, or e-mail [greg.beets@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:greg.beets@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **WIC Media Campaign**

On May 19, the Texas Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) launched a media campaign with informational messages being aired on

both television and radio. By the end of July, the number of Texas WIC participants jumped to over 838,000, the highest participation level in the history of Texas WIC. In comparison to July 2002, this year's media campaign prompted a 10% increase in the number of participants served throughout the state. *For more information, contact Mary Van Eck, Public Health Nutrition and Education Division, Bureau of Nutrition Services, at (512) 458-7111, ext.1-3484, or e-mail [mary.vaneck@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:mary.vaneck@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## Program Updates



### Rabies Monthly Update – July 2003

During July, there were no cases of canine rabies in South Texas. To date, no canine rabies cases have been reported north of the South Texas Oral Rabies Vaccination Program (ORVP) drop-zone for coyotes. In West-Central Texas, there were 5 cases of gray fox rabies in the following counties: Runnels (1 raccoon), Tom Green (1 fox), Uvalde (1 cat), and Val Verde (1 bobcat, 1 fox). To date, no cases of gray fox rabies have been reported beyond the boundaries of the original ORVP drop-zone for gray foxes.

There were 50 reported cases of rabies in animals, including:

30 skunks	2 foxes
14 bats	1 bobcat
2 cats	1 raccoon
2 dogs	

These cases were reported from the following counties:

Angelina (2 skunks)	Medina (1 skunk)
Brazos (2 skunks)	Montague (1 skunk)
Brown (1 skunk)	Nacogdoches (1 skunk)
Cherokee (1 bat, 1 skunk)	Navarro (1 skunk)
Coleman (1 skunk)	Panola (1 bat)
Cooke (1 skunk)	Robertson (1 cat, 1 skunk)
Crockett (1 skunk)	Runnels (1 raccoon)
Denton (1 skunk)	Smith (1 bat)
El Paso (1 bat)	Taylor (1 skunk)
Erath (1 skunk)	Tom Green (1 fox, 1 skunk)
Fort Bend (1 bat)	Travis (2 bats)
Guadalupe (1 bat)	Trinity (2 skunks)
Gray (1 skunk)	Uvalde (1 cat)
Harris (5 bats, 1 skunk)	Val Verde (1 bobcat, 1 fox)
Howard (1 skunk)	Wharton (2 skunks)
Kaufman (1 skunk)	Wheeler (1 skunk)
Kleberg (1 bat)	Wise (1 skunk)
Lamb (2 skunks)	
Lavaca (1 skunk)	

Also you can visit TDH's Zoonosis Control Web site at: [www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis).  
*For more information, contact Jim Schuermann, Zoonosis Control Division, at (512) 458-7255 or e-mail [jim.schuermann@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jim.schuermann@tdh.state.tx.us).*





### **USDA Meeting on WIC Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) System**

Staff from the Bureau of Nutrition Services (BNS) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) met with staff from the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of the USDA Dallas Region in August to discuss policy and waiver approvals for implementation of the EBT system. EBT will replace paper food vouchers with a smart card. Eight major policy issues were discussed regarding new ways of conducting WIC operations in an EBT environment. All of the proposals were received favorably with some requests by FNS for further information and modifications to the original BNS proposal. BNS expects to be able to fully accommodate the changes FNS has said are necessary. TDH WIC will submit a formal written request to FNS in September seeking formal approval. Some issues may require additional approval by USDA FNS headquarters in Washington, D.C. *For more information, contact Valerie Wolfe, Bureau of Nutrition Services, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-2072, or e-mail [valerie.wolfe@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:valerie.wolfe@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Delegation from South Africa to Learn About WIC Operations**

In early September, a high-level delegation of officials from South Africa will visit Texas to learn about food assistance programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA). They are interested in how these programs are administered and operated at the federal, state, and local levels. In particular, they are interested in how to build infrastructure and may use this information to develop similar programs in their country. According to staff from the USDA Dallas regional office, this visit is "very important to President Bush." Mr. Eric Bost, USDA Under Secretary; Mr. Jerome Lindsay, USDA Deputy Administrator for Regional Operations; as well as USDA Food and Nutrition Service staff from the Dallas regional office, will accompany them. They visited a City of Houston Health and Human Services Department Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clinic operated under contract with the TDH on September 10. On the same day, they visited a Houston-area store authorized to accept both Food Stamps and WIC food vouchers where they met with store management. On September 11, they visited the Colonias in the Harlingen area and the WIC clinic operated by Hidalgo County Health Department. A follow-up report will be sent after the visits have occurred. *For more information, contact Mike Montgomery, Bureau of Nutrition Services, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 1-3048, or e-mail [mike.montgomery@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:mike.montgomery@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Texas Violence Against Women Prevention Advisory Committee**

Texas Violence Against Women Prevention Advisory Committee completing work on grant: The Bureau of Women's Health received a \$50,000 planning grant from the Center for Injury Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2002 to develop a state strategic plan for the prevention of violence against women. The one-year grant ends Sept. 29. A steering committee -- made up of representatives from TDH, the Texas Council on Family Violence and The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault -- organized a diverse group of community-based, government, nonprofit, health care, and research professionals to form the Texas Violence Against Women Prevention Advisory Committee (VAWPAC). The VAWPAC, comprising about 25 key stakeholders, has met monthly to put together the state strategic plan. The final meeting under the grant was September 9. The Executive Directors of each of the agencies/organizations represented were invited to attend a brief presentation about the accomplishments of the VAWPAC, which included an overview of priority issues and recommendations. Executive Directors



were asked for a commitment for further collaboration. The presentation took place at the North Austin Medical Center. *For more information, contact Mary Chapman McIntosh, Bureau of Women's Health, at (512) 458-7796, ext. 1-6705, or e-mail [mary.mcintosh@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:mary.mcintosh@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Professional Licensing and Certification**

Six of the independent licensing boards administratively attached to the TDH have submitted their self-evaluation reports to the Sunset Advisory Commission. The six licensing boards include the Texas Board of Social Worker Examiners, Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, Texas State Board of Examiners of Dietitians, Texas State Board of Examiners of Perfusionists, and the Texas Midwifery Board. All of the boards have a sunset date of 2005. *For more information, contact Jim Zukowski, Professional Licensing and Certification Division, at (512) 834-6628 or e-mail [jim.zukowski@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jim.zukowski@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Standards of Performance**

The TB Elimination Division Standards of Performance and model Standing Delegation Orders were revised and distributed to contractors. *For more information, contact Charles Wallace, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **TB Program Reviews**

On September 3-5, a team of reviewers drawn from the TB Elimination Division and two regional health departments will participate in a TB program review for the El Paso City–County Health and Environmental District. *For more information, contact Emmanuel Iroanya, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [emmanuel.iroanya@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:emmanuel.iroanya@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Ten Against TB (TATB) Activities**

The Ten Against TB (TATB) Executive Committee meet in Laredo, on September 12 to discuss the strategic plan and proposed future activities. *For more information, contact Charles Wallace, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us) or Jose Moreira, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [jose.moreira@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jose.moreira@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **TB Meetings**

The TB Elimination Division will host two meetings for TB field staff on October 9-10, in Austin. Program managers will discuss important changes affecting the delivery of TB services and medical records staff will receive training and information on new data collection and reporting requirements. *For more information, contact Charles Wallace, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Hepatitis C Staff Delivers Presentation at Statewide Rural Health Conference**

On August 27, Gary Heseltine and Alma Thompson were guest speakers at the annual statewide Texas Rural Health/Texas Rural Health Partners conference at the Doubletree Hotel in Austin. They presented “How to Promote a Successful Hepatitis C Rural Outreach Campaign” and “Hepatitis C: Why is it Important?” *For more information, contact Gary Heseltine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **IDEAS and Immunizations Division Host Joint Exhibit**

On August 26-27, the Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance (IDEAS) and Immunizations Divisions exhibited a joint booth at the annual statewide Texas Rural Health/Texas Rural Health Partners conference at the Doubletree Hotel in Austin. *For more information, contact Gary Heseltine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Perinatal HIV Prevention**

Two presentations on Promising Practices were made by Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention staff at the National Perinatal HIV Prevention meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, June 10-12. One presentation entitled *Opt-Out Testing in Texas* outlined Texas' perinatal HIV testing law, implementation of the law and the law's impact on prenatal and perinatal HIV testing and the number of children contracting HIV through mother to child transmission. The second presentation entitled the *Texas Birth Certificate Concordance Study* summarized this ongoing study to validate the HIV prenatal and perinatal testing data on the Texas Birth Certificate. *For more information, contact Sharon K. Melville, HIV/STD Epidemiology Division, at (512) 490-2505 or e-mail [sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Appointment of Acting Senior Management Positions**

Due to the six-month limitation on the capacity of staff to serve in an “acting” capacity, the Acting Bureau Chief (Janet D. Lawson, MD) and the Acting Director of the HIV/STD Health Resources Division (Felipe Rocha) completed their terms in these roles in June. At the request of Sharilyn K. Stanley, MD, Linda S. Moore, MS, RN, assumed the role of Acting Bureau Chief; Leslie Mansolo, MSN, RN, CNS, assumed the role of Acting Director of the HIV/STD Health Resources Division (HRD); and Debra Seamans, MSN, RN, assumed the role of Acting Division Director for the HIV/STD Clinical Resources Division (CRD). The effective date for these roles was July 1. *For more information, contact Linda S. Moore, Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention, at (512) 490-2505 or e-mail [linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Initiation of Bureau Reorganization**

Key bureau managers met with the associate commissioner to review and discuss proposed plans to reorganize the alignment of programmatic and managerial responsibilities within the Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention in order to meet the required management to staff ratio and to improve the capacity of staff to perform job functions in an efficient and effective manner. Bureau staff awaits the decision of the associate commissioner regarding the approved bureau organizational structure. *For more information, contact Linda S. Moore, Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention, at (512) 490-2505 or e-mail [linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Contract Negotiation for Reduced Texas HIV Medication Program (THMP) Drug**

The Acting Bureau Chief, Texas HIV Medication Program (THMP) Manager, and the Office of General Counsel are processing contracts and applications for additional manufacturer drug discounts, negotiated by the National AIDS Drug Assistance Program Task Force. Drug manufacturers agreeing to provide additional drug discounts to the THMP include Abbott, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Gilead, Merck, Boehringer Ingelheim, Roche, Pfizer and Glaxo Smith Kline. The discounts will be deducted from the current Public Health Service drug price and are expected to result in budgetary savings for the

THMP. For more information, contact Linda S. Moore, Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention, at (512) 490-2505 or e-mail [linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.moore@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **Newborn Screening Tests**

In July the Newborn Screening (NBS) Laboratory analyzed more than 325,620 tests on 65,124 newborn screening specimens to provide results for the battery of five different disorders.

The Newborn Screening Laboratory reported the following critically abnormal laboratory screen results to the Newborn Screening follow-up team of nurses: 37 elevated phenylalanine results indicating possible phenylketonuria, 27 elevated galactose results indicating possible galactosemia, 45 elevated TSH results indicating possible hypothyroidism, 28 clinically significant hemoglobinopathies, and seven extremely elevated 17-OHP results indicating possible congenital adrenal hyperplasia. For more information, contact Eldridge T. Hutcheson, Biochemistry and Genetics Division, at (512) 458-7430 or e-mail [eldridge.hutcheson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:eldridge.hutcheson@tdh.state.tx.us).

## **Regional Updates**

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### **Public Health Region 1**

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#### **Immunization Efforts**

On August 13, regional and central office staff attended and participated in the Amarillo Bi-City-County Health District Provider Appreciation Banquet. At the meeting, Region 1 presented Amarillo College a certificate of appreciation for their continued support of immunization efforts. Amarillo College provides continuing education credits for Immunization Update conferences held annually in Region 1. Regional Immunization staff also participated in Amarillo's Kids Fest held on August 16. Approximately 1,500 attendees were present and 600 children were immunized. Finally, regional Immunization staff partnered with the City of Lubbock Health Department and McDonalds restaurants in Lubbock to include immunization education information on serving trays in this service area. The information provided also included contact numbers and available clinics. For more information, contact Shirley Richardson, Immunizations Program, at (806) 767-0498 or e-mail [shirley.richardson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:shirley.richardson@tdh.state.tx.us).

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### **Public Health Regions 2/3**

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#### **Weapons of Mass Destruction – Operations Training Exercise**

On August 5, 6, and 7, Texas A & M University's Texas Engineering Extension Service, along with the City of Pantego Fire Department facilitated a practical training exercise for local staff members and stakeholders within the community. This is the first of many Bioterrorism Preparedness Exercises that will be conducted in the upcoming months for Hospital Emergency Response Teams, Fire, Police, Public Works, and Local Health

Departments. This exercise covered multiple aspects of operations and crisis scenarios to share with the community plans in actions regarding bioterrorism. *For more information, contact Marco Montes, Regional Office, at (817) 264-4656 or e-mail [marco.montes@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:marco.montes@tdh.state.tx.us).*

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## Public Health Region 4/5 North

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### **Tri-County Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Forum**

On August 2, Region 4/5N in partnership with the Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health, held a Tri-County Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Forum in Coldspring. Elected officials, law enforcement officers, public health specialists, and others from Houston, Trinity, and San Jacinto counties attended the sessions. Paul K. Carlton, M.D., and Paul K. McGaha, D.O., M.P.H., presented updates regarding bioterrorism prevention and public health preparedness. The session was part of ongoing efforts to enhance preparedness in the Tri-County area. *For more information, contact Paul McGaha, Regional Director, at (903) 595-3585 or e-mail [paul.mcgaha@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:paul.mcgaha@tdh.state.tx.us).*

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## Public Health Region 6/5 South

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### **Public Health Preparedness Activities**

The Public Health Preparedness Program hosted the first Regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) workgroup meeting. The workgroup consists of local health department grantees and stakeholders from our counties that lack local health departments. Participants identified specific regional SNS objectives and goals that need to be addressed to insure an effective and efficient deployment of the SNS inventory in Region 6/5South. Regional staff provided participants with CDC's video entitled, "Strategic National Stockpile: Guidance and Overview for State and Local Planners." The video will be a useful tool in recruiting potential SNS volunteers.

The Public Health Preparedness Program hosted the monthly Local Health Department Task Force Smallpox Sub-Committee Meeting. The committee is to respond to action items identified by local health department grantees. During the August meeting regional staff provided committee members with the CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training booklet along with the accompanying "Emergency Risk Communication CDCynergy" CD, CDC's "Post-Exposure Prophylaxis for Anthrax, Plague, and Tularemia" CD in 48 languages, St. Mary's School of Law in San Antonio and the Air Force Development Center for Operational Medicine's "Bioterrorism and the Law Conference" CD, and hand-outs from the TDH/DPS-Division of Emergency Managements' training on Emergency Management Planning in Texas and Incident Command System. *For more information, contact Barbara Key, Region 6/5South, Public Health Preparedness, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [barbara.key@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:barbara.key@tdh.state.tx.us).*

The Public Health Preparedness Program conducted an educational SNS overview for regional BioWatch stakeholders. Regional staff have hosted and facilitated the BioWatch Workgroup that is composed of representatives from three local health departments, Region 6/5South, FBI and TECQ. The workgroup is charged with developing protocols

and response plans specifically for the BioWatch initiative. BioWatch members in a previous meeting had requested information on how the Region would secure large amounts of medications and prophylactic drugs. The SNS overview provided the members an insight into how a large inventory of drugs and medical supplies could quickly be made available in the event of a large-scale disaster in Region 6/5South. Region 6/5South developed and submitted the regional application for the FY04 Public Health preparedness and Response to Bioterrorism Grant from CDC. The activities, deliverables and budget were approved by OPHP and OSE. The Public Health Preparedness Program hosted a workgroup meeting with regional Bioterrorism coordinators and grantees to discuss guidance and logistics for the continuation efforts in the Pre-Event Smallpox Vaccination Program. *For more information, contact Dr. Luis Gonzalez, Region 6/5South, Public Health Preparedness Epidemiology Response Team, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [luis.gonzalez@tdh.stat.tx.us](mailto:luis.gonzalez@tdh.stat.tx.us).*



### **Community Events**

August was back to school month and Region 6/5South nursing clinics were busy immunizing the children in their communities. A total of 3,347 does of vaccine were administered during the back to school rush from mid July through the end of August. *For more information, contact Sandra O'Keefe, Associate Regional Director for Nursing, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [sandra.okeefe@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sandra.okeefe@tdh.state.tx.us).*

Region 6/5South staff collaborated with the City of Houston Department of Health and Southeast Asian Community Organization to conduct an immunization clinic on August 10. The event was held at the Shanai Banquette Hall. 167 vaccinations were delivered to 100 children. An additional 134 children had their immunization records reviewed and with parental consent were enrolled into the ImmTrac system. This community clinic is now a local VFC provider and serves as a medical home for those living in the area without resources to access health care. Other activities included delivery of culturally sensitive educational information about HIV/STD, tuberculosis, birth defects, dental programs, CHIP, WIC and other programs. Local media provided community coverage for this event. *For more information, contact Dr. Aftab Hashim, Disease Prevention, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [aftab.hashim@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:aftab.hashim@tdh.state.tx.us).*

Region 6/5South WIC program celebrated National Breastfeeding month by providing motivational classes to WIC participants. On August 14 and 15, WIC clinics located in Waller County and Colorado County provided motivational classes geared toward maternal education of the health, social and psychological benefits of breastfeeding. Speakers included Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, LaLeche League member and regional WIC staff. Volunteers that provided baby quilts, children's clothing and toys were honored. All items made by volunteers are distributed to breastfeeding mothers as incentive to continue breastfeeding. *For more information, contact Veronica Brown, Region 6/5South, WIC Program, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [veronica.brown@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:veronica.brown@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Presentations/Awards**

Regional Director, Dr. Celine Hanson, gave a presentation on adult influenza and pneumococcal vaccine delivery to the Texas Medical Foundation sponsored statewide webex conference on August 28.



Sandra Ford, R.N., along with Coastal AHEC gave a Liberty County Health Awareness Coalition, Inc., presentation and a poster session at the August 38<sup>th</sup> Texas Rural Partners & Texas Rural Health Association in Austin.

Sandra Ford, R.N., accepted the Community Cares Award for 2003 on behalf of the Liberty County Health Awareness Coalition Inc, at the Texas Rural Partners & Texas Rural Health Association conference in Austin. This award recognizes community partnerships whose programs help improve the quality of life in their communities. Mrs. Ford, a public health nurse in Region 6/5South and specifically our Cleveland Clinic, started this very active coalition in Liberty County in July 1999 as part of her Title V funded population-based efforts. *For more information, contact Dr. Celine Hanson, Regional Director, at (713) 767-3000 or e-mail [celine.hanson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:celine.hanson@tdh.state.tx.us).*

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## Public Health Regions 9/10

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### **Polvo de Avion (Airplane pesticide dust)**

Region 9/10 Office of Border Health and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held a press conference to unveil an educational video on the dangers of household toxic pesticide use. The video warns residents against the illegal purchasing of this powder hazard and their homes. The powder is approved for agriculture use in Mexico, but is re-packaged for home use by private vendors. *For more information, contact Blanca Serrano, Office of Border Health, at (915) 834-7690 or e-mail [blanca.serrano@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:blanca.serrano@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Strategic National Stockpile Training**

The El Paso Epidemiology Response Team sponsored SNS training for health workers, and law enforcement officers. Presenters included SNS staff from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and TDH Central Office. Participants included Federal, State and Local Agency representatives from West Texas and Southern New Mexico. *For more information, contact Sandra Byrd, Public Health Preparedness, at (915) 834-7753 or e-mail [sandra.byrd@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sandra.byrd@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Executive Deputy Commissioner Visit**

Executive Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Nick Curry was present during retirement ceremonies for regional staff. Dr. Curry recognized and thanked twelve regional employees who retired after many years of dedicated service. *For more information, contact Dr. Miguel A. Escobedo, Regional Director, at (915) 834-7680 or e-mail [miguel.escobedo@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:miguel.escobedo@tdh.state.tx.us).*

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## Public Health Regions 11

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### **Operation Lone Star**

Operation Lone Star held field clinics in three valley schools. TDH was the lead civilian agency and the Texas Army National Guard led the military side. This was funded by the Navy and Marine Reserve with 50% of the volunteers coming from local agencies in a true community, military, and TDH partnership. Military reservists provided 17,272



medical and dental services this year, including 3,000 dental procedures. As in previous years, people camped out during the night to get in line for services. *For more information, contact Ramiro Gonzales, Office of Border Health, at (956) 423-0130, ext. 635, or e-mail [ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us).*